Why We Should Not Increase Our Armaments

THERE are various reasons why the United States should not contract the disease of large armaments. It is a contagious disease and one with which the news of the present day infects certain classes of our citizens.

These classes are composed of (1) those who are connected with the army or navy, who give their time and scientific knowledge to the study of the past and future of war; (2) those who directly, or at second-hand, expect to profit commercially by a war or an armed peace, and (3) those honest patriots who really believe the various stories of expected attacks upon our national integrity or prosperity induced by the hate or avarice of other nations.

The first class is happily small, due to our peaceful traditions. Its members are, however, active, and, in proportion to their numbers, influential. They have developed their subject into one of considerable interest and scientific expansion. They are intelligent and mostly sincere and patriotic. The second class need have little consideration. They are, as many Americans, after business profits, and if the preaching of the doctrines of war pays, they will use their great influence upon public opinion, through the press, to fill their private coffers. There are more of them in the aggregate than one generally recognizes.

The third class is made up of men who are open to conviction and will ultimately determine the question. The following considerations may appeal to some of them:

It is not likely that any of the nations now at war i Europe will be ready to attack the United States for severa decades. In the meantime any guns or gunboats we choos to make will be antiquated and a dead loss. These nation let the war eventuate as it will, will be burdened with fearfu taxes, with crippled industries, with abundant memories o the horrors of the battlefield and suffering of the non-com batant part of the population. Nothing but the most flagran attack by us, or a combination of conditions which no or can foresee, could induce one or a group of them to ente upon the tremendously expensive and probably uncertain an unprofitable task of an expedition against the United State For a hundred years, except for the farcical Spanish nav journey to the West Indies, there has been no attack, an during the most of this time our preparations have been f less adequate than now.

Nor is there any more danger from Japan. Everyon who has felt the temper of the Japanese government an people is sure that neither interest nor desire exists for a American war, a war which would be without prospect final success and would break them down with financi burdens they are in no condition to stand. If we would brin half the thought and influence to bear on our government make it absolutely just and generous in our treatment other nations, that some of us spend in fearful anticipatio of what will never come, we will be immune from war for generation ahead. These considerations might induce us least to postpone our great expenditures till the lessons a the results of the present war are more clearly seen.

Again if we, as we hope, shall some time in the ne future be able to act as a mediator and peacemaker amo the warring nations, we must approach the issue with cle

hands and free from the suspicion of ulterior motives. We must say to them, in a voice which they will respect, that we have nothing to gain from them in the way of territory or national privileges. We have only a little army for police purposes and a navy not strong enough for aggression. We have made no preparations to grasp anything for ourselves. We should, if they wish, willingly act as arbiter or simply provide the machinery for their own negotiations. We want, for the good of all, peace restored on a satisfactory, permanent basis, and we hope to gain for ourselves nothing but our share of the blessings which will follow this consummation. Only in this way can we do our duty.

If we begin to arm because we are behind in the race for armaments, there is no end to the process except a great war. With every increase abroad, there will be a new cry for new appropriations here. The burden of taxation, now already being severely felt in certain quarters, will grow by leaps. Now two-thirds of our national expenditures go to warlike purposes, including pensions. This vast sum will be increased much more rapidly than our resources, and either added taxes or the withdrawal of aid from internal developments will follow. How much wiser to make our potential resources of use to our people and the world, food and clothing cheaper, wages better and more homes happy, than to go into this unproductive venture, which, as present conditions show, always ends in war!

"Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he reap," and beginning on a course of warlike preparation, with the general awakening of the military spirit and the contagious enthusiasm which will follow, fanned by our increasing army and navy followers, and the commercial interests, will put us in a condition that on the least provocation we will place

our equipment in action. Armaments mean war. Dependence upon justice means peace and we shall reap as we sow.

What, then, are the duties of American citizens in this crisis?

To develop a universal feeling, to allay race and national prejudices and suspicions which often ripen into war.

To cultivate a judicial attitude which will take the viewpoint of an alien nation and appreciate its reasonable demands.

To limit commercial ambitions and methods, both individual and national, to such an extent as to recognize the just rights and proper desires of others.

To discourage the military spirit in our men and boys, the growth of a military class, the development of military and naval equipment in our nation.

To base our moral ideals upon the New Testament and have faith that they will carry us through even when we can not clearly see the future way.

To nourish within ourselves and our neighbors the Christian spirit, so that as far as in us lies there can be no war; to do our full duty by moral methods and then trust to the care and providence of God.

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